The Formation of Psychological Stability of Scientific and Pedagogical Teams of Higher Education Institutions in the Conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian War

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Original Article

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Abstract:

The article examines the peculiarities of the psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The significance of the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions was analyzed. The factors included the ability to overcome life and professional challenges and maintain and strengthen physical and mental health.

The object of the research is the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The subject is the peculiarities of the psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions. The goal is to determine the peculiarities of the psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions.
The goal is to determine ways to increase the level of psychological stability and preserve the physical and mental health of scientific and pedagogical workers of higher education institutions. The importance of the formation of psychological stability for scientific and pedagogical workers in a period of social challenges and upheavals for the development of professional self-regulation and preservation of national identity is highlighted.
The concept of the "psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions" is revealed as the ability of specialists to maintain a stable level of professional activity in conditions of physical, psychological, socio-pedagogical, and personal discomfort. The components of the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war are substantiated. The results of the diagnostics of factors affecting the psychological stability of 25 scientific and pedagogical workers of 5 higher educational institutions of Ukraine in modern realities are presented. A program for forming the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war is proposed.

Introduction

In the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions in Ukraine are facing unexpected challenges, and they need to set an example of psychological stability for the subjects of the educational process and the global educational and scientific communities. The activation of internal potential, the mobilization of resources, and the search for tools to provide their own psychological stability have become challenges for all educators in Ukraine.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Scientific and Scientific and Technical Activity" dated 26.11.2015 N 848-VIII, "a scientific and pedagogical worker is a scientist who professionally carries out pedagogical and scientific or scientific and pedagogical activity" (1).

A culture of behavior sets social norms, expectations, and ways of interaction between individuals. Emotional culture then influences the way people experience and express their emotions, how they cope with stress, and what their emotional regulation strategies are (2).

Currently, scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions are not only specialists in their fields. First of all, they are a creative, professional team and a group of like-minded people. Each representative makes their own individual contribution to collective activity and the development of education and science.

In the conditions of the modern reality in Ukrainian society, the scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions need to form psychological stability due to the negative

impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on physical and mental health. A scientific and pedagogical team of a higher education institution having psychological stability means it has the ability to maintain a safe and effective educational space for each of its subjects.

The purpose of the study is to form the psychological stability of the scientific and pedagogical team of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war and determine methods for preserving and strengthening physical and mental health.

To achieve this goal, **the following issues** were considered: revealing the essence of the concept of "psychological stability of the scientific and pedagogical teams"; the determination of the content and organizational aspects of the psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical teams; clarification of the diagnostic results of the factors influencing the psychological stability of the scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war; the development of a program for the psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Study Rationale

The problem of psychological stability in individuals has been considered in many domestic and foreign studies by scientists and practitioners. In particular, in foreign works the topic of psychological stability was considered by authors (10-18).

During their professional lives, the scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions repeatedly experience stressful situations that leave an imprint on their physical and mental health (10, 19). "The accumulation of tasks, the nature of them, and the scale of the workplaces' high demands on professional and human availability can be stressful" (20, p. 108). Therefore, to work effectively, an employee must be resilient and able to cope with stress (21, 22).

Workplace stress is a state of physical and mental tension that arises in the scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions due to the influence of adverse circumstances of professional activity, everyday life, and extreme situations (11). For example, this is influenced by the fact that academic staff at higher education institutions under martial law often experience anxiety and even depression. This is exacerbated by interaction with higher education students who are also experiencing such psychological disorders (23, 24). When carrying out one's teaching duties in addition to research activities, an employee sometimes has to overcome internal weakness, a lack of knowledge, doubts, a lack of sleep, exhaustion, a lack of time, underfunding, etc. (25). The person experiences "fear and trembling" and is responsible for choosing and solving issues while dealing with their own life (26, 27). A person acts in accordance with their own moral standards, moral principles, and based on their spirituality (28-31). This creates stressful situations when there is an internal conflict between personal beliefs and real circumstances (e.g., the inability to meet the expectations of colleagues or the educational institution's administration, or when giving partially undeserved or motivating grades) (32).

Internal crises are exacerbated by external crises: the Russian-Ukrainian war; the difficult economic situation in Ukraine; the threat of nuclear war; professional challenges (for example, ensuring quality interaction in an inclusive environment) (33); working with students who are experiencing stress; particularly during social adaptation (34, 35); cooperation with students with post-covid syndrome (36), etc. Professional ambitions, aspirations, competition, goals, situations of uncertainty, defeats, and the search for new solutions are examples of factors contributing to the psychological stability of the scientific and pedagogical team of higher education institutions (37).

The very nature of these and similar questions would not be problematic if it were not an expression of refusal to participate in public and society-wide matters (2).

Psychological stability is an integrative property of a person that is characterized by the interaction of emotional, volitional, intellectual, and motivational components of mental activity to ensure the successful achievement of a goal in

difficult circumstances (13, 38). It is worth considering that psychological stability determines the mental and somatic health of a person, protects them from disintegration and personality disorders, and creates the basis of internal harmony (17).

The psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions refers to the ability to provide qualitative resistance to negative external influences and stresses, recover after crises, and successfully develop in circumstances that are rapidly changing, with the best possible outcome for themselves.

Purpose of the study

The goal of the study was to determine the features of psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Methodology

The study employed the questionnaire method, a comparative analysis based on collected data during the empirical study of determining the features of psychological stability formation of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The online tool "Google Forms" was chosen for data collection. The study was conducted on a sample of scientific and pedagogical employees of higher education institutions in Ukraine. The questionnaire consisted of fifteen open-ended questions, to which the participants gave detailed answers. This questionnaire was used to determine the factors influencing the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions.

Study Results

In order to study the factors influencing the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions, a survey was conducted among 25 scientific and pedagogical workers from 5 higher education institutions in Ukraine (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, State Higher Educational Institution "Donbass State Pedagogical University," Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University, Mykhailo Drahomanov Ukrainian State University, Western Ukrainian National University).

According to the results of the survey, the following indicators and factors influencing the mental stability of scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions were identified (Table 1): an increased level of personal anxiety (25 respondents (100%)), disruption of the phases of cheerfulness and rest (22 respondents (88%)), permanent stressful situations

Table 1 The results of the survey

Factors (indicators) of influence on the mental stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions	Respondents (scientific and pedagogical staff)	Percentage
Increased level of personal anxiety	25	100
Disturbance of phases of cheerfulness and rest	22	88
Permanent stressful situations	20	80
Reduced or increased need for communication	22	88
Mood swings	24	96
Disrupted intellectual activity	22	88
Unsatisfaction or partial satisfaction of physiological needs	25	100
Reduced level of professional productivity	25	100
Deterioration of physical and mental health	24	96

Source: own research

(20 respondents (80%)), a decrease or increase in the need for communication (22 respondents (88%)), mood swings (24 respondents (96%)), disruption of intellectual activity (22 respondents (88%)), unsatisfied or partial satisfaction of physiological needs (25 respondents (100%)), a decreased level of professional productivity (25 respondents (100%)), deterioration of physical and mental health (24 respondents (96%)).

The determined indicators of the impact on the mental stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions made it possible to schematically depict the factors influencing the mental stability of the scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war (Figure 1).

The results of the diagnostics made it possible to determine the components of the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions. The psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war involves the presence of four basic components: existential, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. The existential component is the awareness of the goals and objectives of the scientific and pedagogical team; the emotional component is ways of responding to events and supporting the scientific and pedagogical team; the cognitive component is the beliefs of the scientific and pedagogical team; the behavioral component is the actions of the scientific and pedagogical team (Fig. 2).

The existential component involves a tangible sense of isolation, strengthening professional stability and personal beliefs, and the presence of a goal in one's professional field. The emotional component involves the resource emotional states of the scientific and pedagogical team, positive emotional moods, emotional stability, the ability to understand and control emotional states, the ability to empathize, and compassion. The cognitive component involves the cognitive flexibility of the scientific and pedagogical team, reducing the assessment of the threat to health and life, and maintaining positive self-esteem and positive beliefs (60, 61). The behavioral component involves the social competence of

Figure 1 Factors influencing the mental stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions

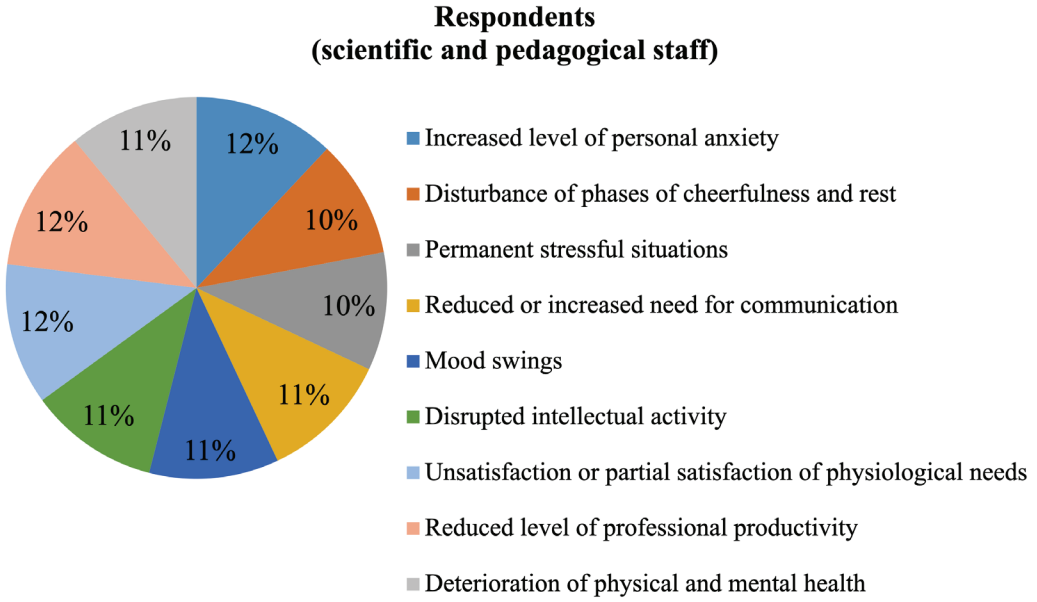
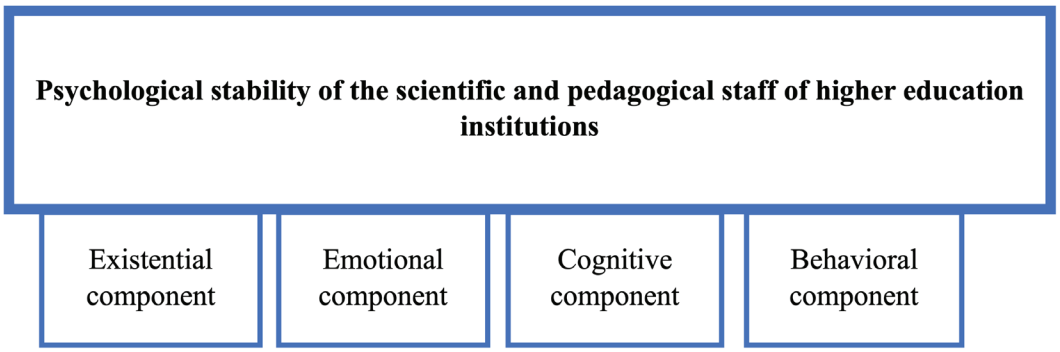


Figure 2 Components of psychological stability of the scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions



the scientific and pedagogical staff, a search for resources among social ties, active coping strategies, the presence of social support from society and the higher education institution, support for physical and mental health, and the advantages altruistic behavior brings.

One key aspect of psychological stability formation of the scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions is the creation of a socio-psychological support program aimed at providing the necessary assistance and psychological, social, educational, and legal support to restore physical and mental health.

Such a program must take into account the best practices in the field of social work and the needs and capabilities of the target audience.

The purpose of the developed program is to provide effective psychological support to reduce negative consequences, promote social and educational adaptation, and ensure safety and support in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The main components of the program:

– Psychological support: individual consultations with a psychologist to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as to restore self-esteem and psychological stability;
– Social support: consultations with a social worker on issues of social and legal protection;
– Rehabilitation support: group classes for support and exchanges of experience, all with an aim of improving the psychological stability of the scientific and pedagogical staff in higher education institutions;
– Educational support: consultations on the organization of the educational process in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war (Table 2).

It is necessary to explain why it is important to implement all the components of the program.

Providing effective psychological support to academic staff is crucial due to the significant emotional and mental pressure caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war in daily life during wartime that, in addition to military personnel, also affects civilians (39, 40, 41). The war, like any other destructive phenomenon, leads to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, and it exacerbates professional burnout (42, 43). Individual consultations with a psychologist, which can be provided on a paid or volunteer basis, help reduce these negative effects, process difficult emotions, and lower stress levels (44). Such sessions help restore self-esteem and maintain psychological stability, which is especially crucial for educators as they must maintain high professional standards and interact with students. Improving mental health through consultations also enhances work efficiency, reduces errors, and improves adaptation to stressful conditions (45).

Social support for the academic staff of higher education institutions during the Russian-Ukrainian war is essential for protecting their rights, ensuring a stable working environment, and adapting to challenging conditions. It is important to note that social support for individuals has always been relevant and important

in difficult periods of history. This is true both now (first during the Covid-19 pandemic and now during the war) and in the past (for example, back in the days of early Christianity) (46, 47, 48). It is provided by social workers who work in various state, public (including religious), and international institutions to implement social services (49). Today, consultations with a social worker on socio-legal protection help educators understand their rights, access social benefits, and address issues related to forced displacement and financial assistance (50). The consultations also contribute to preventing professional burnout, which is an indicator of instability in professional meaningfulness, adapting to new working conditions, and maintaining the quality of education, making them an integral element of support for educators during times of crisis

Table 2 Program of socio-psychological support of the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions

Month 1	Weeks 1-2	Overview and introduction to the program of socio-psychological support of the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions
		Individual consultations with a psychologist and social worker to identify key needs and problems
		Group session to get to know each other, define goals and objectives
	Weeks 3-4	Individual consultations with a psychologist to develop an individual plan for the formation of psychological stability
		Group classes to develop stress management skills and improve self-awareness.
Months 2-3	Weeks 5-8	Individual consultations with a psychologist to assess progress and adjust the support plan
		Group class on developing social skills and interacting with others
	Weeks 9-12	Individual consultations with a psychologist and social worker to discuss opportunities to obtain socio-legal support
		Group session for support and exchange of experiences among program participants
Months 3-4	Weeks 12-14	Individual consultations with a social worker to address specific problems and find ways to solve them
		Group class on developing self-awareness and self-esteem
	Weeks 15- 18	Individual consultations with a social worker to support them in difficult work situations and develop a positive attitude towards the future
		Group class on developing social adaptation and support skills
Months 5-6	Weeks 19-22	Final individual consultations with a psychologist and social worker
		Group session on evaluating results and planning further steps towards building psychological stability
	Weeks 23-24	Final group session with feedback and summarizing the program
		Assessing the effectiveness of the program and preparing for further steps towards building psychological stability

Source: own research

(51, 52). Interestingly, this can only be achieved if the consultant is empathetic and insightful, knows how to listen, and formulates specific questions (53, p. 197).

Rehabilitation support for the academic staff of higher education institutions during the Russian-Ukrainian war helps educators maintain emotional balance, cope with stress, and adapt to challenging conditions. "Problems are inevitable in the subtleties of organizational communication, but it does not mean confronting them is uncontrollable" (54, p. 30). Group sessions for support and experience-sharing help strengthen psychological resilience by creating a space for open communication, mutual support, and the development of effective strategies to overcome emotional exhaustion. They help reduce feelings of isolation and foster a sense of unity and professional solidarity, all of which are especially crucial in wartime. Such activities enhance work motivation, support psychological well-being, and contribute to maintaining the efficiency of the educational process, making them an essential element of comprehensive support for academic staff.

Educational support for the academic staff of higher education institutions during the Russian-Ukrainian war is important as it helps educators effectively adapt to new teaching conditions while maintaining the quality of the educational process. Consultations on organizing the teaching process during the war allow for the development and implementation of optimal teaching methods, such as distance or blended learning, that meet the demands of the current situation. For this purpose, computer technologies are actively used, especially in the context of the digitalization of various social spheres, including education (55, 56, 57). Such consultations help address issues related to organizing classes, assessing student performance, and adapting teaching materials to the realities of wartime. This should be based on modern scientific research on the implementation of education under martial law and should consider, for example, the protective mechanisms of participants in the educational process from military influences and their need for self-realization, as well as the extended duration of time spent in the digital environment due to distance or blended learning formats (58, 59). This support helps maintain the professionalism of the teaching staff, ensures the stability of the educational process, and reduces stress for educators. All of this, in turn, contributes to preserving a high quality of education during a crisis.

A key element of the effective implementation of the socio-psychological support program for the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions is partnership cooperation. Such cooperation provides a comprehensive approach to solving the problem and covers all levels of assistance and support on the way to forming the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions.

Conclusion

As a result of the study, it was found that the problem of forming the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions is multifaceted and requires a comprehensive approach. The analysis of theoretical aspects allowed us to identify the main factors influencing the formation of psychological stability, as well as their impact on physical and mental health. The main problem remains the need to increase the effectiveness of measures to form psychological stability.

Discussion

The developed program to provide social and psychological support for the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions includes a comprehensive approach to solving a problem in ways that include psychological, social, rehabilitation, and educational support. An important aspect of the program is partnership cooperation on the way to forming the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions. To form said psychological stability, it is advisable to introduce comprehensive assistance programs into the educational process and ensure access to them for scientific and pedagogical staff of higher education institutions. A step such as this is especially significant in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Prospects for further research

Prospects for further research are to identify and develop tools for forming the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical teams of higher education institutions and to search for resource strategies for the psychological stability of scientific and pedagogical workers in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

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